

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

May 8, 2012

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Joshua P. Starr, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: Update on Curriculum 2.0 Implementation for 2012–2013

This memorandum provides an update on the continuing implementation of Curriculum 2.0 for the 2012–2013 school year. Plans include rollout at Grade 3; use of standards-based report cards for kindergarten–Grade 3 students, including an electronic grade book, in all elementary schools; and the creation of a traditional electronic grade book for Grades 4–5 in those schools that currently are not using standards-based grading and reporting.

Background

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) began the development process for Curriculum 2.0 in 2007. This process included ongoing stakeholder input and feedback; research on integrated curriculum models as well as critical and creative thinking, and academic success skills; and components of existing content-specific curriculum guides. A unique characteristic of Curriculum 2.0 is the integration of thinking and academic success skills, or those skills that contribute to students' ability to creatively solve problems collaboratively, interpret multiple perspectives, analyze complex data, and understand connections among a variety of ideas. These skills have been identified in the educational research as the tools necessary to participate and thrive in the 21st century knowledge-based global economy.

Voluntary implementation of Curriculum 2.0 began in 2009–2010 in kindergarten. During 2010–2011, implementation was voluntary for both kindergarten and Grade 1. This year, all schools were required to implement Curriculum 2.0 in kindergarten and Grade 1, with voluntary implementation in Grade 2.

Implementation of Curriculum 2.0 at Grade 3

Beginning in summer 2011 through this school year, Curriculum 2.0 professional development has been provided to core teams of school leadership staff members and job-alike groups

(administrators, reading specialists, staff development teachers, and math content coaches/math representatives). Additionally, substitute time has been allocated to schools for collaborative planning and curriculum study by grade-level and/or school teams. Central office staff members are supporting individual schools through visits and consultation.

Many Grade 3 teachers are participating in local school Curriculum 2.0 professional development this year. Identified Grade 3 teachers from each school attended the April 2012 core team training, and will attend core team training in June 2012. The Grade 3 curriculum was posted in the Instruction Center on *myMCPS* the first week of April 2012, allowing Grade 3 teachers to begin to work with the curriculum almost six months prior to actual classroom implementation. To preview the curriculum and begin planning this spring, Grade 3 teachers were allocated substitute time (one day).

Additionally, in January 2012, the Elementary Curriculum Implementation Self-Assessment was used with all elementary school principals to reflect on their implementation status of Curriculum 2.0, as well as their readiness to implement Curriculum 2.0 in Grade 3 for the 2012–2013 school year. Following completion of the self-assessment, community superintendents and directors of school performance met with principals to gather school responses, identify effective practices to share across clusters, and collect feedback that outlined suggestions for improvements.

Standards-Based Grading and Reporting for Kindergarten–Grade 3

During the past six years, a cadre of our elementary schools has been working with us to develop a standards-based grading and reporting system that includes standards-based report cards and an electronic grade book. Montgomery County Board of Education Policy IKA, *Grading and Reporting*, states that grading and reporting practices must align with the MCPS curriculum. In support of this policy, new report cards have been developed for kindergarten–Grade 3 students that align with Curriculum 2.0 and the Common Core State Standards. This year, the 25 elementary Online Achievement and Reporting System (OARS) schools have been piloting these report cards and helping to ensure that they support the instructional program, facilitate teachers' work in fair and accurate grading and reporting, and are user-friendly and informative for parents. During the past two years, parent representatives from the 25 elementary OARS schools have worked with our curriculum office to provide feedback and input on features of standards-based grading and reporting, including the report card. As a result, the modified report card is more user-friendly and informative for parents.

In addition to the standards-based report cards, OARS includes an electronic grade book that allows teachers to manage and manipulate a variety of data, automatically calculate grades, and monitor multiple measurement topics. With this tool, teachers may more easily maintain and manage a wide variety of data in an effective and timesaving manner.

Ongoing Support for Curriculum 2.0 and Standards-Based Grading and Reporting

Beginning in March 2012 and continuing this summer and throughout the 2012–2013 school year, professional development and technical assistance to support Curriculum 2.0 and standards-based grading and reporting will be provided to the following audiences:

- Principals
- Local school teaching and learning representatives (standards-based grading and reporting liaisons)
- All implementing grade-level teachers
- Other school-based teacher leaders and specialists

These professional development opportunities will be differentiated to allow for early exposure to content prior to implementation; just-in-time help and support at the local school during initial implementation; coaching from a colleague with strong content knowledge; and collaborative learning in professional learning communities.

Additionally, instructional technology specialists will be available to schools during preservice week and throughout the first marking period to provide on-site support as schools transition to using the electronic grade book. Core team training will continue for Grade 3 and substitute time will be allocated to teachers for planning and continued curriculum study.

We believe we are building the skills and knowledge of our school staff members and have the momentum to implement Curriculum 2.0 in Grade 3 in all schools next year, continue implementation in kindergarten–Grade 2, and integrate standards-based grading and reporting.

Electronic Grade Book for Grades 4–5

Teachers of Grades 4–5 students will have an electronic grade book in which they will manage assignments, record data related to student performance, and share information with parents. The provisioning of the electronic grade book for Grades 4–5 will help facilitate report card preparation, enable the completion of report cards from any computer, and provide teachers with a more efficient and streamlined approach to recording student data and reporting the data to students and parents.

Collaboration with Stakeholders

Throughout the year, we have worked closely with our employee association partners as well as parent and community stakeholders to provide information, answer questions, and receive input and feedback on Curriculum 2.0 to improve our products, services, and communication. These efforts include the following:

- Regular meetings with the Montgomery County Education Association Councils on Teaching and Learning
- Fourteen Parent Academy workshops

- Meetings with individual schools/clusters, upon request
- Monthly Elementary Principals' Curriculum Update meetings
- Quarterly Curriculum Advisory Assembly meetings

Communication Plan

As we prepare for the full implementation of Curriculum 2.0 and the use of standards-based grading and reporting in kindergarten–Grade 3, we are working with our principals, teachers, and parents to create multimedia, multilingual communications materials. This work will be informed by our learning over the past several years as we piloted standards-based grading and reporting in the 25 elementary OARS schools. We understand how critical it is to provide clear, concise, and consistent information to our schools to use with parents and the broader community as we make this transition in curriculum and instruction as well as grading and reporting.

As we did last summer in preparation for full-implementation of Curriculum 2.0 in kindergarten and Grade 1, and voluntary implementation in Grade 2, we are developing a multimedia communication plan. A sample of items in the plan includes the following:

- Newsletter article and summary points for school leaders to use with parents and staff members this spring to support the transition.
- Materials for Back-to-School Night, parent conferences, and curriculum nights will be distributed this summer and in early fall.
- Curriculum 2.0 posters on Thinking and Academic Success Skills for the classroom will be disseminated prior to the opening of school in August.
- Information for inclusion in local schools' summer mailings will be forwarded to principals in July.

At the table for today's discussion are Mr. Sherwin A. Collette, chief technology officer, Office of the Chief Technology Officer; Mr. Erick J. Lang, associate superintendent, Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs; Mrs. Ebony Y. Langford-Brown, director, Elementary School Instruction and Achievement; and an elementary school principal.

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